

Department of Soil, Water, & Climate/Water Resources Center
University of Minnesota - Twin Cities

Soil Health Specialist

Assistant Extension Professor

The Department of Soil, Water, and Climate (SWAC) and Water Resources Center (WRC) seek to hire a soil health specialist who can provide expertise and educational programming on soil health issues for conservation and agricultural professionals in Minnesota. This is a full-time position within the University of Minnesota Extension system.

Background

The foundation for clean surface water and groundwater is the ability of soil to absorb, hold, and filter water. “Soil Health” is the capacity of soil to perform these and other functions that protect water, soil, and other resources, and that support agricultural productivity and long term profitability. Despite the importance of soil health, many Minnesota farmers and their advisors are not familiar with the economic and environmental value of improving soil health. Fewer still have successfully adopted cover crops, reduced tillage, and other practices that build soil health. Many professionals that work with farmers, such as Extension Educators, Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff, and Certified Crop Advisors (CCA), lack the advanced knowledge, training, or tools to adequately assist these farmers. Furthermore, these same professionals lack opportunities to network and collaborate to develop solutions, promote soil health practices, and support growers.

This position is the centerpiece of the newly formed Minnesota Office for Soil Health (MOSH), with funding from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and Minnesota Agricultural Experiment Station through the WRC. MOSH will be coordinated by the WRC and is designed to enhance alignment between the University’s research, outreach, and innovation with BWSR’s mission to develop and maintain a trained and skilled conservation delivery system. The objective of MOSH is to protect and improve soil and water resources by developing the knowledge, skills and abilities of local

conservationists to more effectively partner with stakeholders and promote sustainable soil and land management.

Appointment and Location

This is an “A” term, 12-month non-tenure track, full-time appointment with Extension and research responsibilities and accountability. The person in this position will be physically housed in the Department of Soil, Water, and Climate on the St. Paul Campus. Frequent travel around the state is expected.

Qualifications

Minimum:

- A Ph.D. degree at the time of hire in soil science, crop science, agronomy, or related field;
- Research or practical experience working with one or more of the following: nutrient cycling, soil or crop management, soil genesis, soil microbiology, soil chemistry, soil fertility, and soil physics;
- Demonstrated achievement in written communication.

Desired:

- Experience working effectively in interdisciplinary research and extension teams and with diverse clientele groups including farmers, agricultural advisors, agency staff, and researchers;
- Track record of publications and grants in areas related to soil health;
- Experience with cover crops, perennial crops, tillage practices, and other sustainable cropping systems;
- Experience in outreach and educational programming, and documented effectiveness in conducting and disseminating applied research;
- Excellent oral communication skills.

Responsibilities:

- (70% time) Provide leadership and effective Extension programming on issues and initiatives related to soil health, targeting BWSR, partner agencies, SWCDs and other farmer advisors in the private and public sector. Outreach is expected through in-person events, written publications, and electronic communication.
- (30% time) Develop a collaborative, applied research program on the impact of soil health on sustaining agricultural production and protecting water

resources. Peer reviewed publications and pursuit of extramural funding are expected.

- As part of those two roles:
 - Work with the MOSH leadership team to identify research and outreach priorities;
 - Engage and provide leadership in Minnesota's soil health advisory council and other state and regional soil health networks;
 - Collaborate with nutrient management specialists, hydrologists, and extension educators within the department and college, at Research and Outreach Centers, and with BWSR and other state and local agencies.

Salary and Benefits: Salary is competitive and commensurate with experience and qualifications. Benefits include University retirement; group life, medical, and dental insurance plans. The position is available immediately. Detailed benefits information is available at:

<http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/benefits/index.html>.

How to Apply: Apply online via the Employment System at <http://humanresources.umn.edu/jobs> and select option for External Faculty and Staff Applicants and search for Job ID#: 321004

See the full position description and learn more at www.swac.umn.edu/about-us/employment.

Applications must include a cover letter with a summary of extension and research interests especially related to soil health management, a detailed resume, a copy of undergraduate and graduate transcripts, and the names and addresses of three persons who would serve as references. Review of applications will begin January 2, 2018 and continue until the position is filled. Direct inquiries to:

Administrative contact - Stacy Nordstrom, nordstro@umn.edu

Dr. Paulo Pagilari
Search Committee Chair
Department of Soil, Water, and Climate

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